



# MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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Office of the President Emeritus

June 17, 2004

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commissions  
Office of the Secretary  
9300 East Hampton Drive  
Capitol Heights, MD 20743

**RE: MM Docket No. 99-325**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

WABE is Atlanta's radio station which broadcasts NPR news/information and Classical Music every day. While we are pleased with our offerings in Atlanta, many of our supporters have begun to express frustration with the dual format. Music lovers point out that there is no other radio station which broadcasts Classical Music. Our news listeners state that people who want music can buy the CD's the station plays, but WABE is their source for National Public Radio news and intelligent talk shows. Many of our listeners have experienced other cities where there is more than one public radio affiliate, or where the public radio station has two frequencies, each devoted to a different format.

The tension between these two groups continues to build and has resulted in an increasing amount of time, and effort invested in trying to guide the station along the fine line between them. It has also cost our station members on both sides of the divide.

Classical Music is disappearing from radio nationwide and, sadly, it has been reduced or eliminated from many school curricula. For many young people in the Atlanta area, WABE provides an educational service as an introduction to Classical Music and, often their only source for it. For those with physical or financial limitations who cannot attend live concert performances, Classical Music on WABE provides a life enriching experience.

Similarly, a growing number of listeners (including taxi drivers) rely on NPR news programs to keep them informed in a timely manner, and provide the quality of coverage unique to National Public Radio. In Atlanta, the hours devoted to NPR news and talk programming is limited because of WABE's dual format. While our

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station offers NPR news magazine programs daily, there are many shows of outstanding caliber that we cannot carry because a part of our mission is dedicated to providing Classical Music. National call-in shows, news documentaries, programs on health, science, and the environment are not in our line-up because of our commitment to air Classical Music during the workday, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and after 8:00 p.m.

The obvious solution is two signals, one for news and information and one for music. Radio stations in the Atlanta market have become very expensive, however-well beyond the reach of publicly-supported, non-profit institutions. Because funds are limited and the cost of acquiring a second frequency is well beyond our means, having a Supplemental Audio Channel (SAC) would be the solution to our dual-format dilemma. If WABE had the capacity to multiplex, the programming could serve both constituencies and attract a much larger audience. This would provide a far greater service to the 4 million people in Metropolitan Atlanta. The SAC would also enable us to use existing programs in an expanded fashion, and develop new, more diverse programming whose appeal may be more targeted and defined. It would also permit us to satisfy widely-expressed community needs currently not being served, by dramatically expanding our production of news/information and music programming.

We urgently hope that the FCC-ruling on Digital Radio and SAC will result in our ability to provide more diverse and far-reaching service to our citizens of Metropolitan Atlanta.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Louis W. Sullivan, M.D." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Louis W. Sullivan, M.D.

President Emeritus  
and Chairman  
Board of Directors  
WABE